Political Science 101
Introduction to American Government and Politics
Fall 2018
HYBRID: TUESDAYS SIERRA VISTA 228 12:20pm-1:45pm & ONLINE
Instructor: Prof. Alex Kocol
Contact: akocol@glendale.edu
Office: VG 209
Office Hours: FRIDAYS: 9am-11am (CANVAS Discussion Board) and by appointment.
Minimum prerequisite: Eligibility for ENGL 120 or ESL 151

ONLINE RESOURCES
Campus Guides: http://campusguides.glendale.edu/kocol
Help Desk: help@glendale.edu

Course Description
This is a hybrid course which will meet every Thursday in Sierra Vista 223 from 12:20pm-1:45pm. A significant portion of this class will also be conducted online. Consistent participation and engagement in both modalities are expected. Students who fail to establish their presence for two or more weeks may be dropped, or earn a failing grade in the course. Our objective is to introduce students to the institutions, principles, and mechanisms of government in the United States and California. We will consider the various ways that political power manifests itself and how it impacts, or is impacted by, the mass polity.

Students will examine the structure of the federal government and analyze some of the functions performed by the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive branches. An introduction to the US Constitution and Bill of Rights will serve as our basis for a critical study of the American legal system—in particular civil rights and liberties. This course will also examine the American electoral process, current trends in voter behavior, and the looming power of special interest groups. By analyzing California state and local government, within the scope of the federal system, students will consider some core features of American federalism. This course intends to encourage critical inquiry into the theoretical principles of American government. By considering quintessentially American political values, like democracy, equality, and liberty, we hope to establish a framework for students to assess the presence of these concepts in our modern society.

Course Outline
Week 1 (8/30) Introduction and the Main Currents of American Politics
Week 2 (9/6) Democracy, Elitism, and Pluralism (CH 1)
Week 3 (9/13) Introduction to the U.S. Constitution (CH 2)
Week 4 (9/20) American Federalism (CH 3)
Week 5 (9/27) Constitution and the Bill of Rights in Practice
Week 6 (10/4) California Government and Politics
Week 7 (10/11) Civil Liberties (CH 4)
Week 8 (10/18) Civil Rights (CH 5)
Week 9 (10/25) Midterm
Week 10 (11/1) Political Parties (CH 9)
Week 11 (11/8) Special Interests (CH 10)
Week 12 (11/15) Public Opinion (CH 6)
Week 13 (11/22) No School—Thanksgiving Vacation
Week 14 (11/29) Voting, Campaigns, and Elections (CH 7)
Week 15 The Supreme Court (CH 13)

FINAL 12/11 1:40-3:15pm
Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the required course work, the student will be able to:
1. describe the theoretical basis of government;
2. describe and evaluate the impact of federalism;
3. analyze the elements of the federal Constitution and the California Constitution;
4. evaluate the basic institutions of American government and the State of California;
5. evaluate political processes such as elections and interest groups affecting American government and California;
6. critique selected public policies.

Academic Etiquette and Best Practices
Students are expected to demonstrate respect for the learning process in the college and university settings. By conforming to some universal standards associated with academic success, students can begin to acquire the characteristics and traits which are valued in academia…

  Effort and Hard Work: Are you persistent and diligent? Do you dedicate the necessary time, attention, and focus to produce high level work.
  Attention to Detail: Are you able to carefully follow complicated and nuanced concepts/directions? Does your performance/work maintain a high level of precision?
  Preparation: What do you bring to the class? Do you consistently come ready to perform at a high level?
  Time Management: Are you able to effectively balance your priorities in order to perform at a high level? Can you plan ahead?
  Conscientiousness: Do your actions consistently demonstrate a sense of rectitude and good judgment?

Course Assessments, Assignments, and Grading
The grading scale will be as follows: A= 90-100+ points, B= 80-89 points, C=70-79 points, D= 60-69 points, F= 59 or below.

  15 Weekly Reflection Assignments: 2 POINTS (30%)
    -Due by Friday, 11:55PM each week.
  Weekly CANVAS Quiz: 1 POINT (15%)
    -Due by Sunday, 11:55PM each week.
  5 Documentary Reviews: 3 POINTS EACH (15%)
    -Assigned throughout the semester.
  Midterm (October 25th on CANVAS): 20 POINTS (20%)
  Final (see above): 20 POINTS (20%)

E-Mail Etiquette
Appropriate E-Mail Hours: 7am-7pm.
Understand the difference between sending an email and a text.

  -Email is formal: Protocol demands appropriate formatting, language, specific details, and titles.
  -Professional/academic email threads are short. If it requires a long thread, a face to face conversation is in order.
  -Text is informal, casual, and sporadic. Text threads are long, inconclusive.
  -Everything you write and disseminate has consequences: Use discretion, save your bullets.

Assessing Class Presence
It is expected that students are actively engaged in, and take ownership of, the learning process (not only the grading process). Students will need to be able to follow detailed instructions in order to perform at a high level. Attendance, participation, preparedness, timeliness, organization, engagement, and persistence are a few ways that your class presence is demonstrated. It is crucial that students develop and maintain a strong class presence throughout the course. Developing a sense of academic rectitude and etiquette are essential to your short term and long term success.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
The required text for this class is Openstax American Government—it is available online at no cost. Required supplementary texts are also available online through CANVAS and CampusGuides. Additional texts and videos are also available through Campus Guides.

Online Access
Consistent internet access is required. This course will rely heavily on online learning management such as CANVAS and CampusGuides. Course updates and communications will be sent exclusively via the Glendale webmail server. FERPA guidelines prohibit me from replying to non-GCC email accounts. Please consult with the GCC Help Desk if you are experiencing problems with these resources: help@glendale.edu
Late Papers/Make-Up Quizzes and Exams
Your primary job as a college student is to demonstrate that you can follow detailed directions and meet deadlines. There are no make-up quizzes or exams, late paper submissions will not be accepted. If, and only if, a student has unavoidable and extenuating circumstances will exceptions be considered. I will review each circumstance on a case by case basis and reserve the right to either grant a make-up or issue a zero for the assignment.

Attendance/Absence/Tardiness Policy
Attendance is absolutely critical to your success. There is a direct correlation between higher grade distributions, student success, and attendance. Dropping or Withdrawing from the course is solely the responsibility of the student, however an instructor reserves the right to drop students who miss two, or more, weeks of class.

Students with Special Needs or Disabilities
All students with disabilities requiring accommodations are responsible for making arrangements in a timely manner with the Center for Students with Disabilities.

Academic Honesty
Your ability to project a reputation of integrity requires vigilance and an active attention to detail. It is your duty to familiarize yourself with all of the potential ways you character and academic reputation can be undermined. Please, carefully read and consider the significance of the following statement …
“College study is the process of acquainting students with values and procedures central to scholarship. All students are expected to do their own work. All forms of cheating and plagiarism are absolutely forbidden. This is the official policy of Glendale Community College.” -Policy on Academic Honesty, Glendale Community College District: Board Policy 6133 (adopted 1/27/97)